

Message Text

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16

ACTION NEA-09

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H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 SY-05 /073 W

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R 191600Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7601

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 3812

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, PINS, IN

SUBJECT: ANANDA MARG UPDATE

REF: A. NEW DELHI 5062 (1974)

B. NEW DELHI 9942 (1974)

1. REF A PROVIDES BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE SEMI-SECRET ANAND MARG. REF. B IS LAST UPDATE ON ANANDA MARG LEADER ANAND MURTIJI'S (ALIAS SARKAR)LEGAL STATUS.

2. MURTIJI'S LEGAL SITUATION HAS REMAINED STATIC SINCE LAST JULY WHEN REFTTEL B SENT TO DEPARTMENT. THE ANANDA MARG LEADER IS AWAITING TRIAL BEFORE THE PATNA SESSIONS COURT WHILE A SPECIAL MAGISTRATE IN PATNA COLLECTS THE EVIDENCE ON HIS CASE. (AS MENTIONED IN REFTTEL B, MURTIJI IS NOW CHARGED WITH MURDERING SEVEN OF HIS FOLLOWERS: A CHIEF PROSECUTION WITNESS IS HIS WIFE). PROCEDURAL SNARLS AND APPEALS BY MURTIJI'S LAWYERS CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PRE-TRIAL DELAYS THAT HAVE CHARACTERIZED THIS CASE SINCE HIS IMPRISONMENT FORTY MONTHS AGO. LAST OCTOBER, THE SUPREME COURT REJECTED TWO PETITIONS REQUESTING THAT THE TRIAL SITE BE TRANSFERRED FROM BIHAR WHERE JURTIJI'S LAWYERS

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HAD CONTENTED THEIR CLIENT COULD NOT RECEIVE A FAIR

TRIAL. WE ANTICIPATE FURTHER DELAYS BEFORE THE TRIAL BEGINS,
AND THEREAFTER AS THE CASE IS APPEALED TO HIGHER COURTS.

3. MURTIJI'S SEMI-FAST BASED ON THE FOUR "CONDITIONS" (INCLUDING APPOINTMENT OF A JUDICIAL COMMISSION TO INQUIRE INTO AN ALLEGED POISONING ATTEMPT AND UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF JAILED ANANDA MARG WORKERS) IS STILL UNDERWAY. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THAT HIS HEALTH HAS DETERIORATED MARKEDLY. IT IS MOST UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT WILL GRANT HIS DEMANDS. THE GOI HAS IGNORED BRITISH ATTORNEY H.T. WELL'S REQUEST THAT IT APPOINT A RETIRED JUDGE TO INQUIRE INTO MURTIJI'S CHARGES THAT PRISON AUTHORITIES ATTEMPTED TO ASSASSINATE HIM IN DECEMBER 1973. (WELL'S WRITTEN APPEAL TO THE GOI WAS POUCHED TO NEA/INS AND CONGEN CALCUTTA IN JULY, 1974.)

4. WHILE PUBLICITY ON MURTIJI'S CASE IN THE INDIAN PRESS HAS DECLINED OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS, HIS FOLLOWERS IN INDIA AND ABROAD CONTINUE THEIR ATTEMPTS TO PUSH IT INTO THE LIMELIGHT. ON LAST DECEMBER 11, ANANDA MARG LEADER ACHARYA ATULANAND IMMOLATED HIMSELF IN A PATNA JAIL IN PROTEST AGAINST A WRISTWATCH ALLEGEDLY STOLEN FROM MURTIJI BY JAIL OFFICIALS. ANANDA MARG SPOKESMEN ARE PUBLICLY DENYING CHARGES BY THE CONGRESS PARTY AND THE GOI THAT A "CULT OF VIOLENCE" IN BIHAR LEADING TO ASSASSINATION OF RAILWAY MINISTER L.N. MISHRA WAS GENERATED BY THE ANANDA MARG IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE RSS AND J.P. MARAYAN MOVEMENT. (SEVERAL APPARENTLY WELL-FOUNDED LEADS FROM THE ONGOING INVESTIGATION INTO MISHRA'S DEATH HAVE NOT SO FAR IMPLICATED THE ANANDA MARG.

5. ON JANUARY 19, ANANDA MARG SPOKESMAN IN UP ANNOUNCED THAT THE MARG WILL LAUNCH AN AGITATION IN UP TO FOCUS PUBLIC ATTENTION ON THE "SUFFERINGS" OF MARG LEADERS IN JAIL. THE LACK OF PRESS COVERAGE ON THE THREATENED AGITATION SINCE THE ANNOUNCEMENT INDICATES THAT IT WAS A FAILURE.

6. IN EARLY FEBRUARY, CRAIG RUNDE, AN AMERICAN REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ANANDA MARG, CHECKED AT THE EMBASSY BEFORE PROCEEDING TO PATNA WHERE HE INTENDED TO SEEK PERMISSION TO VISIT MURTIJI IN JAIL. RUNDE HAS SUBSEQUENTLY NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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TACTED EITHER THE EMBASSY OR CONGEN CALCUTTA AND WE DO NOT KNOW IF HE SUCCEEDED IN MEETING MURTIJI.
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Message Attributes

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